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Event-Triggered Pinning Control of Switching Networks

Antonio Adaldo, Francesco Alderisio, Davide Liuzza, Guodong Shi, Dimos V. Dimarogonas, *Member, IEEE*, Mario di Bernardo, *Fellow, IEEE*, and Karl Henrik Johansson, *Fellow, IEEE*

Abstract—This paper investigates event-triggered pinning control for the synchronization of complex networks of nonlinear dynamical systems. We consider networks described by time-varying weighted graphs and featuring generic linear interaction protocols. Sufficient conditions for the absence of Zeno behavior are derived and exponential convergence of a global normed error function is proven. Static networks are considered as a special case, wherein the existence of a lower bound for interevent times is also proven. Numerical examples demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed control strategy.

Index Terms—Network analysis and control, networked control systems, switched systems.

I. INTRODUCTION

NETWORKS of dynamical systems are a suitable model for many distributed phenomena in biology, social sciences, physics, economics, and engineering [1], [2] and have attracted much research interest in the last few decades [1]–[5].

Pinning control is a strategy to steer the collective behavior of a multiagent system in a desired manner. In pinning control problems, the goal is for a set of interconnected dynamical systems to synchronize onto a given reference trajectory. The reference trajectory is supposed to be a solution of the uncoupled agents' dynamics, known *a priori*, and corresponding to some control objective. A small fraction of the agents is selected in order to receive direct feedback control. Such agents are called *pins* or *pinned agents*. The remaining agents are influenced only through their connections with other agents.

Research on pinning control has been carried out from physical and engineering perspectives. The focus is usually on the

design of adaptive pinning controllers [6]–[8], or on finding criteria for the optimal selection of the agents to control [9]–[11], or on finding sufficient conditions for synchronization [12]–[14]. Such conditions usually relate to the agents' dynamics, the network topology, and the pinning scheme.

In many scenarios of multiagent coordination, the assumption that the network topology is constant over time is unrealistic. Topology variations are due to imperfect communication between agents, or simply the existence of a proximity range beyond which communication is not possible. A large number of papers investigate synchronization [15]–[18] or pinning control [19]–[21] under time-varying interaction topologies. Note that communication failures can usually be regarded as switching events. Therefore, a pinning control algorithm, which is intended to be robust against such failures, can be designed by considering the controlled network as a switched system.

Pinning control algorithms have been traditionally designed under the hypothesis of continuous-time communication. In many realistic network systems, however, such hypothesis is not verified. Also, synchronized sampled communication is hard to obtain. Event-triggered control was introduced to limit the amount of communication instances for feedback systems [22]. Recently, event-triggered control has been extended to multiagent systems [23]–[29].

In a realistic multiagent control problem, several challenges are present at the same time: nonlinear dynamics, exogenous reference signals, limited communication capacity, and time-varying interaction topology. In [30], the authors addressed the problem of event-triggered pinning synchronization considering linear diffusive coupling and unweighted network topologies. In this paper, a more general setup is considered, namely, *weighted switching topologies with generic linear interactions* are investigated. A model-based and event-triggered pinning control law is designed, which drives the agent states to an *a priori* specified common reference trajectory. We derive a set of sufficient conditions under which Zeno behavior [31] is avoided and the agents achieve exponential convergence to the reference trajectory. Static networks are studied as a special case, for which we also prove that there exists a lower bound for the interevent times in the sequences of updates of the control signals. Differently from most existing works on event-triggered multiagent control, we envision an implementation of the control algorithm which does not require agents to exchange state measurements at each update time. Agents exchange state measurements only when they establish their connection. When an agent updates its control signal to a new value, it is required to broadcast its value to its neighbors in the network. In this

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A. Adaldo, D. Liuzza, G. Shi, D. V. Dimarogonas, and K. H. Johansson are with ACCESS Linnaeus Centre and School of Electrical Engineering, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm 10044, Sweden (e-mail: adaldo@kth.se; liuzza@kth.se; guodongs@kth.se; dimos@kth.se; kallej@kth.se).

F. Alderisio is with the Department of Engineering Mathematics, University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1UB, U.K. (e-mail: f.alderisio@bristol.ac.uk).

M. di Bernardo is with the Department of Engineering Mathematics, University of Bristol, Bristol BS8 1UB, U.K., and also with the Department of Electrical Engineering and Information Technology, University of Naples Federico II, Naples 80125, Italy (e-mail: m.dibernardo@bristol.ac.uk; mario.dibernardo@unina.it).

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way, it is possible for neighboring agents to predict each others' states consistently.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. In Section II, we introduce some notation, formalisms, and properties that are used in later sections. In Section III, we define the mathematical model adopted to describe the network to be controlled: we state the control objective and we give the expressions of the proposed event-triggered control law. In Section IV, we prove that the closed-loop system is well-posed and achieves the control objective. In Section V, we provide some numerical examples to illustrate the effectiveness of the proposed control strategy, and compare it to a time-triggered control strategy. Section VI presents some considerations on the robustness of the proposed algorithm. Section VII concludes this paper with a summary of our results and some possible future developments.

II. PRELIMINARIES

A. Notation and Mathematical Background

For $x \in \mathbb{R}^n$, we denote $x_{[N]} := [x^\top, \dots, x^\top]^\top \in \mathbb{R}^{nN}$. For a symmetric square matrix A , $A > 0$ denotes that A is positive definite and $A \geq 0$ denotes that it is positive semidefinite.

Definition 2.1: A function $f : (t, x) \in \mathbb{R} \times \mathbb{R}^n \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^n$ is globally Lipschitz with Lipschitz constant L_f if for all $t \in \mathbb{R}$ and all $x, y \in \mathbb{R}^n$, it holds that $\|f(t, x) - f(t, y)\| \leq L_f \|x - y\|$.

The Kronecker product is denoted as \otimes . We recall some useful lemmas, which can easily be derived from [32].

Lemma 2.1: Let $A \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ have eigenvalues $\lambda_1, \dots, \lambda_n$ and eigenvectors v_1, \dots, v_n , and $B \in \mathbb{R}^{m \times m}$ have eigenvalues μ_1, \dots, μ_m and eigenvectors u_1, \dots, u_m . Then, $A \otimes B$ has eigenvalues $\lambda_i \mu_j$ and eigenvectors $v_i \otimes u_j$, $i = 1, \dots, n$, $j = 1, \dots, m$.

Lemma 2.2: Consider $0 \leq A_1, A_2 \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$, $0 < B_1, B_2 \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$, and $0 < c_1, c_2 \in \mathbb{R}$. Then, $c_1(A_1 \otimes B_1) + c_2(A_2 \otimes B_2) > 0$ if and only if $A_1 + A_2 > 0$.

Proof: Preliminarily, note that from Lemma 2.1, we have that $A \geq 0, B > 0$ implies $A \otimes B \geq 0$ and $A \otimes B > 0 \iff A > 0$, while from the equality $(A \otimes B)(C \otimes D) = (AC) \otimes (BD)$, we have $(x \otimes y)^\top [c_1(A_1 \otimes B_1) + c_2(A_2 \otimes B_2)](x \otimes y) = c_1(x^\top A_1 x)(y^\top B_1 y) + c_2(x^\top A_2 x)(y^\top B_2 y)$ for any $x \in \mathbb{R}^N, y \in \mathbb{R}^n$. Now suppose $x^\top (A_1 + A_2)x = 0$. Since $A_1, A_2 \geq 0$, this implies $x^\top A_1 x = x^\top A_2 x = 0$ which, in turn, implies $(x \otimes y)^\top [c_1(A_1 \otimes B_1) + c_2(A_2 \otimes B_2)](x \otimes y) = c_1(x^\top A_1 x)(y^\top B_1 y) + c_2(x^\top A_2 x)(y^\top B_2 y) = 0$. Vice-versa, suppose that $A_1 + A_2 > 0$. Then, at least one of $A_1, A_2 \geq 0$ must be positive definite and, consequently, at least one of $c_1(A_1 \otimes B_1), c_2(A_2 \otimes B_2) \geq 0$ must be positive definite, which implies that their sum is positive definite. ■

B. Graph Theory

We define a graph as a pair $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{V}, W)$ consisting of a set of nodes $\mathcal{V} = \{1, \dots, N\}$ and a time-varying matrix $W(t) = \{w_{ij}(t) \geq 0\} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$. A graph is undirected if the weight $w_{ij}(t) = w_{ji}(t)$ for all $i, j \in \mathcal{V}$ and at all times t ; it is simple if $w_{ii}(t) \equiv 0$ for all $i \in \mathcal{V}$.

In a simple undirected graph, two nodes i and j are said to be neighbors or adjacent at time t if $w_{ij}(t) > 0$. The value $d_i(t) =$

$\sum_{j=1}^N w_{ij}(t)$ is the degree of node i at time t . A path between nodes i and j is a sequence of nodes, starting in i and ending in j or vice-versa, such that every two consecutive nodes are adjacent. A graph is connected if there exists a path between any two of its nodes. If a graph is not connected, then its nodes can be partitioned into subsets such that all resulting subgraphs are connected. Each such subgraph is called a component of the original graph.

The Laplacian matrix $L(t) = \{l_{ij}(t)\} \in \mathbb{R}^{N \times N}$ is defined as

$$l_{ij}(t) = \begin{cases} d_i(t), & \text{if } i = j, \\ -w_{ij}(t), & \text{if } i \neq j. \end{cases}$$

The Laplacian of any simple undirected graph is symmetric with zero row sum and, therefore, the vector $1_{[N]}$ is always an eigenvector with a zero eigenvalue. Also, it can be shown that the Laplacian of such graphs is positive semidefinite and that it has as many zero eigenvalues as components of the graph. In particular, when the graph is connected, the Laplacian has exactly one zero eigenvalue [5].

C. Pinning Control

For the pinning control problem, we extend the graph formalism as follows.

Definition 2.2: Consider a simple and undirected graph $\mathcal{G} = (\mathcal{V}, W)$ and a time-varying matrix $P(t) = \{p_{ij}(t) \geq 0\}$ with $p_{ij}(t) \equiv 0$ for all $i \neq j$. The triple $\mathcal{G}_a = (\mathcal{V}, W, P)$ is an augmented graph. A node i for which $p_{ii}(t) > 0$ is pinned at time t . We say that a component of the graph is pinned if it contains at least one pinned node. We also say that \mathcal{G}_a is pinned if all of its components are pinned. The matrix $P(t)$ is the pinning matrix of \mathcal{G}_a . For any two positive definite and unity-norm matrices $C, K \in \mathbb{R}^{n \times n}$ and any two positive scalars $c, k > 0$, the matrix

$$L_a(t) = c(L(t) \otimes C) + k(P(t) \otimes K) \quad (1)$$

is called augmented Laplacian of \mathcal{G}_a . The smallest eigenvalue of the augmented Laplacian is called augmented connectivity of \mathcal{G}_a .

Note that by construction, the augmented Laplacian is positive semidefinite and, therefore, its augmented connectivity is non-negative. Since the augmented Laplacian is not necessarily positive definite, the augmented connectivity may be zero. The following lemma shows that positive definiteness of the augmented Laplacian is determined only by the structure of the augmented graph, and not by C, K or the scalars c, k .

Lemma 2.3: The augmented Laplacian L_a of the augmented graph \mathcal{G}_a is positive definite at time t if and only if \mathcal{G}_a is pinned at time t .

Proof: We are going to prove this property for $c = k = C = K = 1$, which means that $n = 1$ and $L_a(t) = L(t) + P(t)$. Thanks to Lemma 2.2, the property extends automatically to generic values of c, k, C, K . Moreover, since the statement can be applied at any generic time instant, in the proof, we are going to omit time-dependency.

Without loss of generality, suppose that the graph has $m \geq 1$ components and the nodes are ordered so that consecutive nodes belong to the same component. Namely, the first component contains nodes $n_0 = 1, \dots, n_1$, the second component

contains nodes $n_1 + 1, \dots, n_2$, and the last component contains nodes $n_{m-1} + 1, \dots, n_m = N$. With such node ordering, the Laplacian is block-diagonal with m blocks L_1, \dots, L_m . Each block can be seen as the Laplacian of the corresponding component, which is connected by definition. Hence, each block has exactly one zero eigenvalue. The corresponding eigenvector is $1_{[\ell_i]}$, where $\ell_i := n_i - n_{i-1}$ is the dimension of the i th block or, equivalently, the number of nodes in the i th component. The pinning matrix P is diagonal by definition. Hence, the augmented Laplacian is itself block-diagonal with m blocks $L_1 + P_1, \dots, L_m + P_m$ and, consequently, its eigenvalues are the union of the eigenvalues of these blocks. Consider the generic i th block $L_i + P_i$. Since $L_i, P_i \geq 0$, we have $x^\top (L_i + P_i)x = 0 \iff x^\top L_i x = 0$ and $x^\top P_i x = 0$. The first condition holds when x is a scalar multiple of $1_{[\ell_i]}$, while the second condition holds when x has zero entries whenever P_i has nonzero entries. Hence, both of them are satisfied at the same time by a nonzero x only if $P_i = 0$, which means that the i th component is not pinned. On the other hand, if the i th component is pinned, then the i th block of L_a is positive definite. We can conclude that L_a is positive definite if and only if \mathcal{G}_a is pinned. ■

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

A. System Model and Control Objective

In this section, we define the multiagent system model, the control objective, and the event-triggered control law. We consider a network of N interconnected dynamical agents. The state of the i th agent is denoted as

$$x_i(t) := [x_i^{(1)}(t), \dots, x_i^{(n)}(t)]^\top \in \mathbb{R}^n$$

and the control input applied to that agent is denoted as

$$u_i(t) := [u_i^{(1)}(t), \dots, u_i^{(n)}(t)]^\top \in \mathbb{R}^n.$$

The state of each agent evolves according to the nonlinear control system

$$\dot{x}_i(t) = f(t, x_i(t)) + u_i(t), \quad x_i(0) = x_{i,0} \quad (2)$$

with $t \geq 0$. It is desired that the agents converge to the reference trajectory $r(t) \in \mathbb{R}^n$ defined by

$$\dot{r}(t) = f(t, r(t)), \quad r(0) = r_0 \quad (3)$$

with $t \geq 0$. We introduce the *tracking errors* $e_i(t) := r(t) - x_i(t)$ and the *mismatches* $e_{ij}(t) := x_j(t) - x_i(t) = e_i(t) - e_j(t)$. We also introduce the stack vectors

$$\begin{aligned} x(t) &:= [x_1(t)^\top, \dots, x_N(t)^\top]^\top \\ e(t) &:= [e_1(t)^\top, \dots, e_N(t)^\top]^\top \\ u(t) &:= [u_1(t)^\top, \dots, u_N(t)^\top]^\top \\ r_{[N]}(t) &:= [r(t)^\top, \dots, r(t)^\top]^\top \end{aligned}$$

all belonging to \mathbb{R}^{Nn} . Moreover, we define

$$F(t, x(t)) := [f(t, x_1(t))^\top, \dots, f(t, x_N(t))^\top]^\top \in \mathbb{R}^{Nn}.$$

For convenience, we denote $\eta(t) := \|e(t)\|$. The control goal is to achieve convergence of the agents' states to the reference trajectory, in the sense that

$$\lim_{t \rightarrow +\infty} \eta(t) = 0.$$

B. Control Strategy

To solve the problem stated before, we propose the following piecewise-constant control signal for agent i in (2):

$$\begin{aligned} u_i(t) = c \sum_{j=1}^N w_{ij} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) C e_{ij} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) \\ + k p_{ii} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) K e_i \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right), \quad t \in [t_{k_i}^{(i)}, t_{k_{i+1}}^{(i)}) \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

where the matrices $C, K > 0$ and scalars $c, k > 0$ are design parameters as in (1). Times $t_{k_i}^{(i)}$ when signal $u_i(t)$ changes value are *events* for agent i . Note that the control signal $u_i(t)$ is piecewise-constant, since it is held constant over each interval $[t_{k_i}^{(i)}, t_{k_{i+1}}^{(i)})$. Introduce the errors

$$\begin{aligned} \tilde{e}_{ij}(t) &:= e_{ij} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) - e_{ij}(t) \\ \tilde{e}_i(t) &:= e_i \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) - e_i(t) \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

for $t \in [t_{k_i}^{(i)}, t_{k_{i+1}}^{(i)})$. The sequence $\{t_{k_i}^{(i)}\}_{k=0}^{+\infty}$ is now defined recursively as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} t_{k_{i+1}}^{(i)} := \inf \left\{ t > t_{k_i}^{(i)} : w_{ij} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) \|\tilde{e}_{ij}(t)\| \geq \varsigma(t) \text{ for some } j \in \mathcal{V} \right. \\ \text{or } w_{ij}(t) \neq w_{ij} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) \text{ for some } j \in \mathcal{V} \text{ or} \\ p_{ii} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) \|\tilde{e}_i(t)\| \geq \varsigma(t) \text{ or} \\ \left. p_{ii}(t) \neq p_{ii} \left(t_{k_i}^{(i)} \right) \right\} \end{aligned} \quad (6)$$

where the *threshold function* $\varsigma(t)$ is defined as

$$\varsigma(t) := \varsigma_0 e^{-\lambda_\varsigma t} \quad (7)$$

with ς_0 and λ_ς being given positive design parameters. All sequences are initialized at $t = 0$. Note that the events related to agent i include all of the instants when that agent establishes or loses a connection with another agent or with the reference. The control law (4) is now completely defined.

C. Control Implementation

Let us now discuss the implementation of the control law (4)–(7). We assume that each agent $i \in \mathcal{V}$ at each update time $t_{k_i}^{(i)}$ computes the new control input $u_i(t_{k_i}^{(i)})$ according to (4), given the values $w_{ij}(t_{k_i}^{(i)})$ for all $j \in \mathcal{V}$, $e_{ij}(t_{k_i}^{(i)})$ (with j being a neighbor of i), $p_{ii}(t_{k_i}^{(i)})$, and $e_i(t_{k_i}^{(i)})$ (if i is a pin). We also assume that each agent i is equipped with predictors that can locally estimate the dynamics (2) of the agents themselves. When two agents i, j connect, they exchange their current states x_i, x_j . With such information, they update their control inputs u_i, u_j . According to (6), acquiring a new connection triggers a control update. After the update, the agents broadcast their newly computed control inputs to their respective neighbors. Similarly, when the reference node r connects to agent i , it

sends its own current state to that agent, which updates its control input u_i , and broadcasts it to its neighbors. Hence, neighboring agents know each other's state and control input at each connection time. For each neighbor, j agent i runs a state prediction by integrating the equation

$$\dot{\hat{x}}_j^{(i)}(t) = f\left(\hat{x}_j^{(i)}(t), t\right) + u_j(t)$$

where $\hat{x}_j^{(i)}$ denotes the state of agent j predicted by agent i . A similar prediction is run by agent i for its own state and, if i is pinned, for the reference trajectory. Since the predictors are based on the exact knowledge of the agent dynamics, the predicted states $\hat{x}_j^{(i)}$ coincide with the real states $x_j(t)$. Consequently, agent i estimates $\tilde{e}_{ij}(t)$ according to (5) without communicating continuously with neighbors, but predicting $x_j(t)$ instead. Similarly, if agent i is pinned, it estimates $\tilde{e}_i(t)$ according to (5) without continuously querying the reference. Notice that having piecewise-constant control signals $u_i(t)$ implies that interagent communication is only necessary at update times, when a newly calculated control input is broadcast. Hence, the control law (4) can be implemented locally, since each agent relies only on information provided by neighboring agents. Similarly, each agent i does not need to be aware of all the events, such as topology switches, but only of those relative to $p_{ii}(t)$ and $w_{ij}(t)$, with j being its neighbor before or after the switch.

Remark 3.1: In the proposed implementation, we allow neighboring agents to have up-to-date estimates of each others' states. In principle, such estimates may be used to compute time-continuous control signals, resembling those that would be applied in traditional continuous-time consensus algorithms. However, depending on the application, there can be reasons to choose piecewise-constant control signals despite having continuous state estimates at disposal. For example, it is not uncommon that continuously varying control signals are avoided in order to reduce actuator wear, or even that the available actuators are technologically unable to exert a continuously varying control input. Moreover, if the agents were to use continuously vary control inputs, the predictors embedded in an agent would need to continuously receive information from the neighbors of that agent.

IV. MAIN RESULTS

Consider here a special class of augmented graphs, called *switching augmented graphs*.

Definition 4.1: The augmented graph $\mathcal{G}_a = \{\mathcal{V}, W, P\}$ is said to be *switching* if the matrices $W(t)$ and $P(t)$ are piecewise-constant, that is, $w_{ij}(t), p_{ii}(t) \geq 0$ are piecewise-constant for all $i, j \in \mathcal{V}$. A discontinuity point of $w_{ij}(t)$ is called a *switch* for the pair (i, j) and a discontinuity point of $p_{ii}(t)$ is called a *switch* for node i . A switching-augmented graph is said to have a *dwell time* $\tau_d > 0$ if two consecutive switches relative to the same pair or the same node are separated by a time greater than or equal to τ_d .

Note that in a switching augmented graph, the augmented Laplacian is a piecewise-constant matrix and the augmented connectivity is a piecewise-constant scalar.

We make the following assumptions.

Assumption 4.1: The function f in (2) and (3) is globally Lipschitz with Lipschitz constant $L_f > 0$.

Assumption 4.2: The interactions among agents (2) and (3) are described by a switching-augmented graph $\mathcal{G}_a = (\mathcal{V}, W, P)$ with dwell time $\tau_d > 0$. Moreover, there exists constant positive upper bounds $\bar{w}_{ij}, \bar{p}_{ii}$ such that

$$0 \leq w_{ij}(t) \leq \bar{w}_{ij}$$

$$0 \leq p_{ii}(t) \leq \bar{p}_{ii}$$

for all $t \geq 0$ and for all $i, j \in \mathcal{V}$.

Assumption 4.3: Let $\alpha(t) := \lambda_a(t) - L_f$, where $\lambda_a(t)$ is the augmented connectivity of the augmented graph \mathcal{G}_a defined as in Assumption 4.2. There exist two positive constants T and ψ such that

$$0 < \lambda_\zeta < \psi \leq \frac{1}{T} \int_t^{t+T} \alpha(\tau) d\tau.$$

Remark 4.1: To satisfy Assumption 4.3, it is not necessary for the augmented graph to be always pinned. However, it is necessary that there exists $T > 0$ such that within any finite time window $[t, t + T]$, the augmented graph is pinned for some nonzero time interval. The intuition behind Assumption 4.3 is that in order to guarantee convergence without inducing Zeno [31], the control parameters should be designed in such a way that the enforced convergence rate λ_ζ is slower than the natural convergence rate of the network, which is quantified as ψ . If a faster convergence rate is enforced, Zeno behavior may occur.

Theorem 4.1: Consider the pinning control system defined by the dynamics (2), reference (3), and control law (4)–(7). If Assumptions 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 hold, then the event sequences do not present accumulation points and the normed error $\eta(t)$ converges exponentially to zero.

Proof: We first prove that no accumulation points of events occur. To do so, we note that Assumption 4.2 excludes this possibility for events generated by switches. Still, we have to prove that there are no accumulation points of events generated by conditions $w_{ij}(t)\|\tilde{e}_{ij}(t)\| \geq \varsigma(t)$ or $p_{ii}(t)\|\tilde{e}_i(t)\| \geq \varsigma(t)$.

Consider the closed-loop dynamics of the error

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{e}_i(t) &= \dot{r}(t) - \dot{x}_i(t) \\ &= f(t, r(t)) - f(t, x_i(t)) \\ &\quad - c \sum_{j=1}^N w_{ij}(t) C(e_{ij}(t) + \tilde{e}_{ij}(t)) \\ &\quad - kp_{ii}(t) K(e_i(t) + \tilde{e}_i(t)). \end{aligned}$$

If we denote with $l_i(t)^\top$ and $p_i(t)^\top$, the i th row of the Laplacian and the pinning matrix, respectively, we can rewrite the last expression as

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{e}_i(t) &= f(t, r(t)) - f(t, x_i(t)) \\ &\quad - [cl_i(t)^\top \otimes C + (kp_i(t)^\top \otimes K)] e(t) \\ &\quad - c \sum_{j=1}^N w_{ij}(t) C\tilde{e}_{ij}(t) - kp_{ii}(t) K\tilde{e}_i(t). \end{aligned} \quad (8)$$

Denoting the sum of the last two terms of the above equation with $\xi_i(t)$, we have

$$\dot{e}_i(t) = f(t, r(t)) - f(t, x_i(t)) - [(cl_i(t)^\top \otimes C + kp_i(t)^\top \otimes K)] e(t) - \xi_i(t).$$

Denoting $\xi(t) := [\xi_1(t)^\top, \dots, \xi_N(t)^\top]^\top$, we can group the previous equations for $i = 1, \dots, N$ as

$$\dot{e}(t) = F(t, r_{[N]}(t)) - F(t, x(t)) - L_a(t)e(t) - \xi(t)$$

where $L_a(t)$ is the augmented Laplacian. From the triggering condition (6), we have $w_{ij}(t)\|\tilde{e}_{ij}(t)\| < \varsigma(t)$ and $p_{ii}(t)\|\tilde{e}_i(t)\| < \varsigma(t)$. Therefore, taking into account that the matrices C, K are unity-norm, we have

$$\|\xi_i(t)\| \leq (cd_i(t) + kp_{ii}(t))\varsigma(t)$$

where $d_i(t)$ is the degree of node i . Considering this inequality for all $i \in \mathcal{V}$, we can write

$$\|\xi(t)\| \leq \Delta(t)\varsigma(t) \quad (9)$$

where

$$\Delta(t) := \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^N (cd_i(t) + kp_{ii}(t))^2}.$$

Then, we can write

$$e(t)^\top \dot{e}(t) = e(t)^\top [F(t, r_{[N]}(t)) - F(t, x(t))] - e(t)^\top L_a(t)e(t) - e(t)^\top \xi(t).$$

Assumption 4.1 and the upper bound (9) yield

$$e(t)^\top \dot{e}(t) \leq L_f \eta(t)^2 - \lambda_a(t)\eta(t)^2 + \eta(t)\Delta(t)\varsigma(t)$$

which, if we introduce $\alpha(t)$ as in Assumption 4.3, can be rewritten as

$$e(t)^\top \dot{e}(t) \leq -\alpha(t)\eta(t)^2 + \eta(t)\Delta(t)\varsigma(t).$$

Hence

$$\begin{aligned} \dot{\eta}(t) &= \frac{d}{dt} \|e(t)\| = \frac{e(t)^\top \dot{e}(t)}{\|e(t)\|} = \frac{e(t)^\top \dot{e}(t)}{\eta(t)} \\ &\leq -\alpha(t)\eta(t) + \Delta(t)\varsigma(t). \end{aligned} \quad (10)$$

Applying the comparison lemma [33] to (10) over a time interval $[t, t+T]$ yields

$$\begin{aligned} \eta(t+T) &\leq e^{-\int_t^{t+T} \alpha(\tau) d\tau} \eta(t) \\ &\quad + \int_t^{t+T} e^{-\int_\tau^{t+T} \alpha(\sigma) d\sigma} \Delta(\tau)\varsigma(\tau) d\tau. \end{aligned}$$

Under Assumption 4.2, we have

$$d_i(t) \leq \bar{d}_i := \sum_{j=1}^N \bar{w}_{ij}$$

and consequently

$$\Delta(t) \leq \bar{\Delta} := \sqrt{\sum_{i=1}^N (cd_i + kp_{ii})^2}$$

while under Assumption 4.3, we have

$$\begin{aligned} \int_\tau^{t+T} \alpha(\sigma) d\sigma &= \int_t^{t+T} \alpha(\sigma) d\sigma - \int_t^\tau \alpha(\sigma) d\sigma \\ &\geq \psi T - (\tau - t)\bar{\alpha} \end{aligned}$$

where

$$\bar{\alpha} := \max_{\substack{0 \leq w_{ij}(t) \leq \bar{w}_{ij}, \forall i, j \\ 0 \leq p_{ii}(t) \leq \bar{p}_{ii}, \forall i}} \alpha(t).$$

Therefore, we can bound $\eta(t+T)$ as

$$\eta(t+T) \leq e^{-\psi T} \eta(t) + \bar{\Delta} e^{-\psi T} \int_t^{t+T} e^{(\tau-t)\bar{\alpha}} \varsigma(\tau) d\tau.$$

Substituting $\varsigma(\tau)$ with its expression (7), we obtain

$$\eta(t+T) \leq e^{-\psi T} \eta(t) + \frac{\bar{\Delta} e^{-\psi T} (e^{(\bar{\alpha}-\lambda_\varsigma)T} - 1)}{\bar{\alpha} - \lambda_\varsigma} \varsigma(t).$$

Note that Assumptions 4.2 and 4.3 guarantee that $\bar{\alpha} - \lambda_\varsigma > 0$. For $t = kT$, we have

$$\eta((k+1)T) \leq a\eta(kT) + b\varsigma(kT) \quad (11)$$

where a and b are the positive constants

$$\begin{aligned} a &:= e^{-\psi T}, \\ b &:= \frac{\bar{\Delta} e^{-\psi T} (e^{(\bar{\alpha}-\lambda_\varsigma)T} - 1)}{\bar{\alpha} - \lambda_\varsigma}. \end{aligned}$$

From inequality (11), we can compute

$$\eta(kT) \leq a^k \eta(0) + b \sum_{h=0}^{k-1} \varsigma(hT) a^{k-1-h}.$$

Substituting the expressions of a and $\varsigma(kT)$, we obtain

$$\eta(kT) \leq e^{-\psi kT} \eta(0) + b\varsigma_0 e^{-\psi(k-1)T} \sum_{h=0}^{k-1} e^{(\psi-\lambda_\varsigma)hT}. \quad (12)$$

By explicitly computing the summation in (12), we obtain

$$\begin{aligned} \eta(kT) &\leq e^{-\psi kT} \eta(0) + b\varsigma_0 e^{-\psi(k-1)T} \frac{e^{(\psi-\lambda_\varsigma)kT} - 1}{e^{(\psi-\lambda_\varsigma)T} - 1} \\ &\leq e^{-\psi kT} \eta(0) + b\varsigma_0 \frac{e^{\psi T}}{e^{(\psi-\lambda_\varsigma)T} - 1} e^{-\lambda_\varsigma kT}. \end{aligned}$$

Taking into account that $\lambda_\varsigma < \psi$ yields

$$\begin{aligned} \eta(kT) &\leq \left(\eta(0) + b\varsigma_0 \frac{e^{\psi T}}{e^{(\psi-\lambda_\varsigma)T} - 1} \right) e^{-\lambda_\varsigma kT} \\ &= k'_\eta \varsigma(kT) \end{aligned} \quad (13)$$

where

$$k'_\eta := \frac{\eta(0)}{\varsigma_0} + b \frac{e^{\psi T}}{e^{(\psi-\lambda_\varsigma)T} - 1}.$$

Observing that $\alpha(t) = \lambda_a(t) - L_f$ is lower-bounded by $-L_f$, we can write

$$\dot{\eta}(t) \leq L_f \eta(t) + \bar{\Delta} \varsigma(t)$$

which integrates both sides over an interval $[kT, t]$ with $kT \leq t < (k+1)T$, giving

$$\begin{aligned} \eta(t) &\leq e^{L_f(t-kT)} \eta(kT) + \bar{\Delta} \varsigma_0 \int_{kT}^t e^{L_f(t-\tau)} e^{\lambda_\varsigma \tau} d\tau \\ &\leq e^{L_f(t-kT)} \eta(kT) \\ &\quad + \bar{\Delta} \varsigma_0 e^{L_f t} \frac{e^{-(L_f+\lambda_\varsigma)kT} - e^{-(L_f+\lambda_\varsigma)t}}{L_f + \lambda_\varsigma} \\ &\leq e^{L_f T} \left(\eta(kT) + \frac{\bar{\Delta}}{L_f + \lambda_\varsigma} \varsigma(kT) \right). \end{aligned}$$

Together with (13), the previous inequality yields

$$\eta(t) \leq k''_\eta \varsigma(kT)$$

where

$$k''_\eta := e^{L_f T} \left(k'_\eta + \frac{\bar{\Delta}}{L_f + \lambda_\varsigma} \right).$$

As $kT \leq t < (k+1)T$, we have that $\varsigma(kT) = e^{\lambda_\varsigma T} \varsigma((k+1)T) \leq e^{\lambda_\varsigma T} \varsigma(t)$, which leads to

$$\eta(t) \leq k''_\eta e^{\lambda_\varsigma T} \varsigma(t). \quad (14)$$

The argument above is valid for all $k = 0, 1, \dots$; therefore, inequality (14) is valid at all times $t \geq 0$. Consider now the dynamics of $\|\dot{e}_i(t)\|$. From (8), we apply the triangular inequality, which, considering Assumption 4.1 and that C, K are unity-norm, yields

$$\|\dot{e}_i(t)\| \leq (L_f \|e_i(t)\| + (c\|l_i(t)\| + kp_{ii}(t)) \|e(t)\| + cd_i(t) + p_{ii}(t)k) \varsigma(t). \quad (15)$$

Under Assumption 4.2, we have $p_{ii}(t) \leq \bar{p}_{ii}$, $d_i(t) \leq \bar{d}_i$, and

$$\|l_i(t)\| \leq \bar{l}_i := \sqrt{2 \sum_{j=1}^N \bar{w}_{ij}^2}.$$

Substituting these bounds into (15) and noting from (14) that $\|e_i(t)\| \leq \|e(t)\| = \eta(t) \leq k''_\eta e^{\lambda_\varsigma T} \varsigma(t)$, we can write

$$\|\dot{e}_i(t)\| \leq [(L_f + c\bar{l}_i + k\bar{p}_{ii})k''_\eta e^{\lambda_\varsigma T} + c\bar{d}_i + k\bar{p}_{ii}] \varsigma(t) = \Omega_i \varsigma(t) \quad (16)$$

where

$$\Omega_i := (L_f + c\bar{l}_i + k\bar{p}_{ii})k''_\eta e^{\lambda_\varsigma T} + c\bar{d}_i + k\bar{p}_{ii}.$$

Now, observe that

$$\tilde{e}_i(t) = - \int_{t_{k_i}^{(i)}}^t \dot{e}_i(\sigma) d\sigma$$

and therefore

$$\|\tilde{e}_i(t)\| \leq \int_{t_{k_i}^{(i)}}^t \|\dot{e}_i(\sigma)\| d\sigma. \quad (17)$$

Substituting (16) into (17) yields

$$\|\tilde{e}_i(t)\| \leq \Omega_i \int_{t_{k_i}^{(i)}}^t \varsigma(\tau) d\tau \leq \Omega_i \varsigma(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) (t - t_{k_i}^{(i)}).$$

Hence, the inequality $p_{ii}(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) \|\tilde{e}_i(t)\| \geq \varsigma(t)$ cannot be satisfied as long as

$$\Omega_i p_{ii}(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) \varsigma(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) (t - t_{k_i}^{(i)}) < \varsigma(t) = \varsigma(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) e^{-\lambda_\varsigma(t - t_{k_i}^{(i)})}$$

that is

$$\Omega_i p_{ii}(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) (t - t_{k_i}^{(i)}) < e^{-\lambda_\varsigma(t - t_{k_i}^{(i)})}.$$

The above inequality is guaranteed in a nonempty interval $[t_{k_i}^{(i)}, t_{k_i}^{(i)} + \tau]$, where $\tau > 0$ solves the equation $\Omega_i \bar{p}_{ii} \tau = e^{-\lambda_\varsigma \tau}$. Therefore, there exists a positive lower bound on the time needed to have $p_{ii}(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) \|\tilde{e}_i(t)\| \geq \varsigma(t)$ after $t_{k_i}^{(i)}$.

In the same way, it is possible to prove that there exists a lower bound on the interevent time needed to have $w_{ij}(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) \|\tilde{e}_{ij}(t)\| \geq \varsigma(t)$ after $t_{k_i}^{(i)}$, by considering

$$\tilde{e}_{ij}(t) = - \int_{t_{k_i}^{(i)}}^t \dot{e}_{ij}(\sigma) d\sigma = \int_{t_{k_i}^{(i)}}^t (\dot{e}_i(\sigma) - \dot{e}_j(\sigma)) d\sigma$$

and

$$\|\tilde{e}_{ij}(t)\| \leq \int_{t_{k_i}^{(i)}}^t (\|\dot{e}_i(\sigma)\| + \|\dot{e}_j(\sigma)\|) d\sigma.$$

Therefore, we conclude that event sequences $\{t_{k_i}^{(i)}\}_{k_i=0}^{+\infty}$ present no accumulation points.

Exponential convergence of the error norm $\eta(t)$ follows from (14), and this concludes the proof. \blacksquare

Remark 4.2: Since events can be generated by switches, which are exogenous with respect to the agents' dynamics, two consecutive updates of signal u_i —one caused by a switch and one caused by $p_{ii}(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) \|\tilde{e}_i(t)\|$ or some $w_{ij}(t_{k_i}^{(i)}) \|\tilde{e}_{ij}(t)\|$ meeting the threshold function, may be arbitrarily close in time. For this reason, although we proved that no accumulation points of events exist, our algorithm can still generate control updates that are close. However, this would not be a Zeno behavior.

Definition 4.2: An augmented graph $\mathcal{G}_a = (\mathcal{V}, W, P)$ is *static* if $W(t)$ and $P(t)$ are constant.

Note that in a static-augmented graph, all of the entries w_{ij} and p_{ii} , respectively, of W and P are constant scalars, and so is the degree d_i of node i for $i = 1, \dots, N$; moreover, the augmented Laplacian is a constant matrix L_a and the augmented connectivity is a constant scalar λ_a . The following corollary descends directly from Theorem 4.1.

Corollary 4.1: Consider the pinning control system defined by the dynamics (2), reference (3), control law (4)–(7), and a static-augmented graph \mathcal{G}_a with augmented connectivity λ_a . If

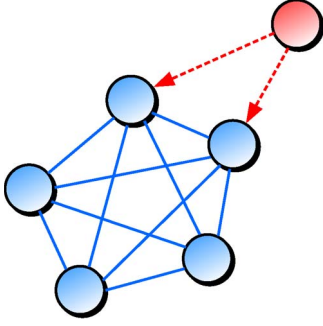


Fig. 1. Illustration of the augmented graph underlying the simulated network. The blue vertices represent the interconnected agents and the red vertex represents the reference. The blue edges represent interagent connections, while the red dashed edges represent the time-varying actions that the reference exerts on two of the agents.

Assumption 4.1 holds and $0 < \lambda_\varsigma < \alpha := \lambda_a - L_f$, then the interevent times $t_{k_i+1}^{(i)} - t_{k_i}^{(i)}$ are lower-bounded by a positive constant and the normed error $\eta(t)$ converges exponentially to zero.

Remark 4.3: When the graph is static, less conservative bounds can be derived for the normed error and the interevent times. Namely, we find

$$\eta(t) \leq k_\eta \varsigma(t)$$

with

$$k_\eta := \frac{\eta(0)}{\varsigma_0} + \frac{\Delta}{\alpha - \lambda_\varsigma}$$

and

$$\omega_i p_{ii} (t_{k_i+1}^{(i)} - t_{k_i}^{(i)}) \geq e^{-\lambda_\varsigma (t_{k_i+1}^{(i)} - t_{k_i}^{(i)})}$$

with

$$\omega_i := (L_f + c \|l_i\| + k p_{ii}) k_\eta + c d_i + k p_{ii}.$$

Here, Δ , l_i , d_i , and p_{ii} are defined as for a switching graph, but they are all constant since the graph is static.

V. NUMERICAL EXAMPLES

In order to illustrate the effectiveness of the proposed control algorithm, we apply it to a simulated network of $N = 5$ identical Chua oscillators [34]. The individual dynamics of each oscillator is described by

$$f(x) = \begin{bmatrix} a(x_2 - x_1 - \phi(x_1)) \\ x_1 - x_2 + x_3 \\ -bx_2 \end{bmatrix} \quad (18)$$

where

$$\phi(y) := m_1 y + \frac{1}{2} (m_0 - m_1) (|y + 1| - |y - 1|) \quad \forall y \in \mathbb{R}.$$

Choosing $a = b = 0.9$, $m_0 = -1.34$, $m_1 = -0.73$, the oscillators are globally Lipschitz with $L_f = 3.54$. See [27] for details. Let the controls be given by (4) with $C = K = I_3$, interaction gain $c = 5$, and control gain $k = 30$. All of the agents are connected to each other with interaction weight $w_{ij} = 1$.

Fig. 1 provides an illustration of the augmented graph underlying the simulated network. Our simulation is set on a time

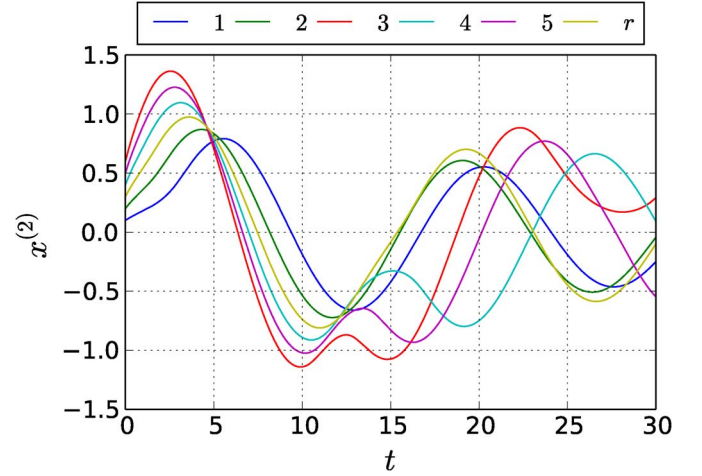


Fig. 2. Second state variable $x_i^{(2)}$ for all agents $i = 1, \dots, 5$ and reference $r^{(2)}$, when no control input is applied. The state variables do not converge to the reference.

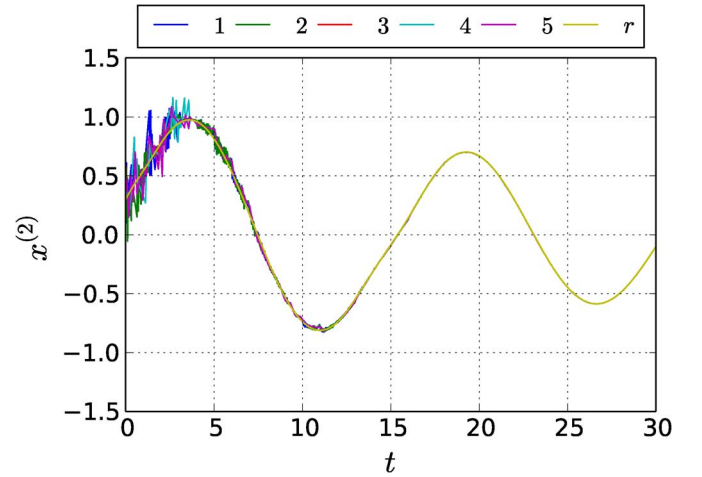


Fig. 3. Same variables as in Fig. 2, but with the proposed control algorithm applied. As predicted by our main result, all state variables converge to the reference.

interval $[0, 30]$ s. At the beginning of the experiment, two agents are pinned with $p_{ii} = 1$, which yields $\lambda_a = 6.14$. At $t = 0.75$, one pin is removed, so that $\lambda_a = 2.88$. At $t = 0.90$ s, the two remaining pins are removed as well, which yields $\lambda_a = 0$. At $t = 1.0$, the original pinning scheme is restored and the cycle repeats itself every second. It is easy to see that Assumption 4.2 holds with $\tau_d = 1$. If we set $T = 1$, we can calculate

$$\psi = \frac{1}{T} \int_0^T \alpha(\tau) d\tau = 1.50.$$

For the threshold function, we pick $\varsigma_0 = 1.0$ and $\lambda_\varsigma = 0.30$, so that Assumption 4.3 holds. For all of the agents, the initial state values are chosen in the domain of attraction of an uncontrolled Chua's oscillator with the given parameters.

Fig. 2 shows the trend of the second state variable of all of the agents and the reference when no control input is applied. Fig. 3 shows the trend of the same state variables when the proposed control input is applied. Fig. 4 shows in detail the same state trajectories in the time interval $[0.0, 1.0]$. Fig. 5 shows the control updates for each of the agents during the

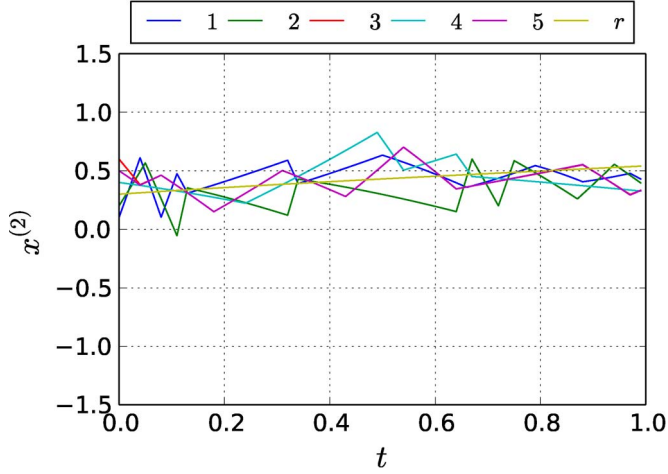


Fig. 4. Second state variable $x_i^{(2)}$ for all agents $i = 1, \dots, 5$ and $r^{(2)}$ for the reference, in the time interval $[0.0, 1.0]$, when the proposed control algorithm is applied.

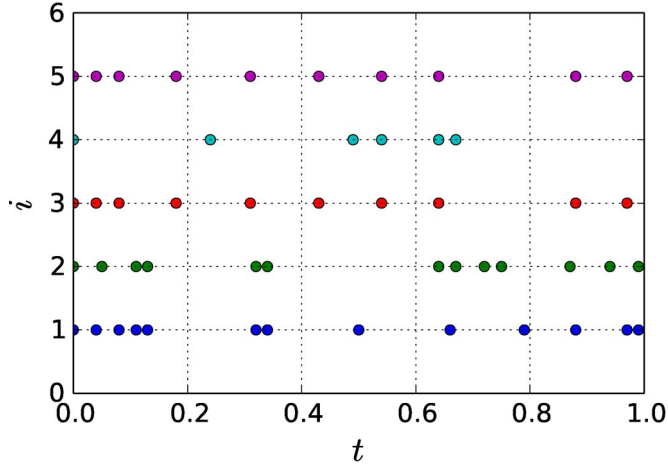


Fig. 5. Instants when a control update is triggered during the time interval $[0.0, 1.0]$. The vertical positions of the markers indicate which agent updates its control signal.

TABLE I
AVERAGE INTEREVENT TIME FOR EACH AGENT IN THE TIME INTERVAL $[0.0, 30.0]$, WITH THE PROPOSED CONTROL ALGORITHM APPLIED

node	average $t_k^i - t_{k-1}^i$
1	0.061
2	0.054
3	0.115
4	0.123
5	0.115

first second of the simulation, while Table I shows the average interevent time exhibited by each agent during the simulation. It is possible to observe that the lowest of these values is above 0.05 s, which means that the agent that updates its control input more often performs less than 20 updates/s on average.

To show the advantages of using an event-triggered control law instead of a time-triggered control law, we also ran a parallel simulation with time-triggered control updates. We used the same network with the same initial conditions, but we excluded the connection failures that characterized the original simulation. We chose a fixed updating period for all of the nodes, equal to 0.04 s. Hence, all of the nodes update their

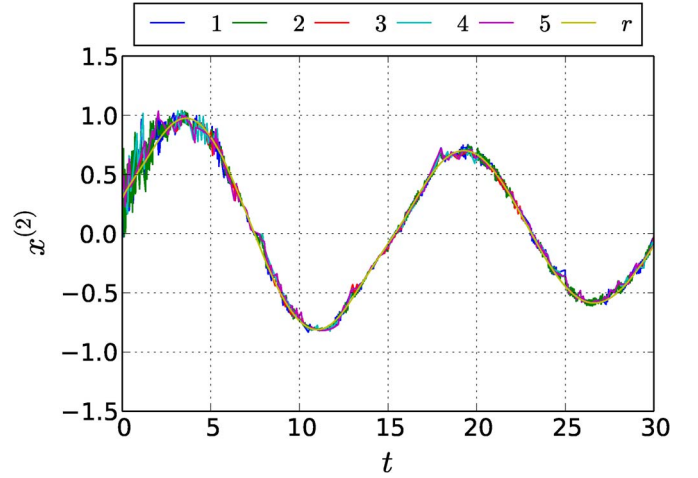


Fig. 6. Second state variable $x_i^{(2)}$ for all agents $i = 1, \dots, 5$ and $r^{(2)}$ for the reference, when the control algorithm for robust bounded convergence is applied.

control input more often, on average, than in the original simulation. Despite more conservative settings, the closed-loop system turned out to be unstable. Simulations are omitted here for the sake of brevity.

VI. ROBUSTNESS

The previous sections focus on the scenario where exact knowledge of the agents' model is available. It was shown that Zeno behavior can be avoided even if perfect convergence is required. However, if disturbances or modelling errors are present, we can modify the algorithm so that *bounded* convergence can be achieved with the absence of Zeno behavior. We define bounded convergence as

$$\limsup_{t \rightarrow \infty} \eta(t) \leq \epsilon$$

for some $\epsilon > 0$. What needs to be changed in the algorithm is the expression of the threshold function $\varsigma(t)$. In the absence of disturbances, we set $\varsigma(t) = \varsigma_0 e^{-\lambda_\varsigma t}$ which forces all of the error signals to eventually shrink to zero. If disturbances are present, we can set $\varsigma(t) = \varsigma_0 + \varsigma_0 e^{-\lambda_\varsigma t}$, which will force the global error $e(t)$ to converge to a ball of radius proportional to ς_0 . Proof of a similar convergence result is given in [27].

To corroborate the considerations before, we reconsider the example proposed in Section V and assume that the predictors embedded in the agents' controllers rely on the model (18), with the parameters given in Section V. However, we assume that the real agents have parameter b equal to 0.84, 0.88, 0.92, and 0.96, respectively. The reference agent has $b = 0.90$. The threshold function is modified as $\varsigma(t) = \varsigma_0 + \varsigma_0 e^{-\lambda_\varsigma t}$, with $\varsigma_0 = 0.1$. Figs. 6–8 and Table II illustrate the results of the simulation. We can see that bounded convergence is achieved and Zeno behavior does not occur.

VII. CONCLUSION

We proposed an algorithm for event-triggered pinning synchronization of complex networks with possibly switching

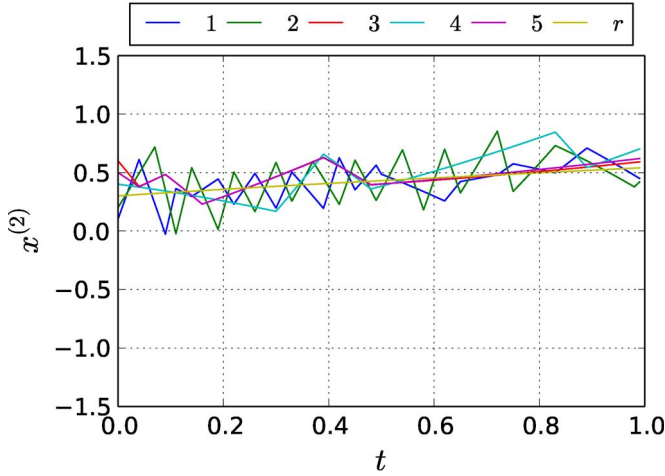


Fig. 7. Second state variable $x_i^{(2)}$ for all agents $i = 1, \dots, 5$ and $r^{(2)}$ for the reference, in the time interval $[0.0, 1.0]$, when the algorithm for robust bounded convergence is applied.

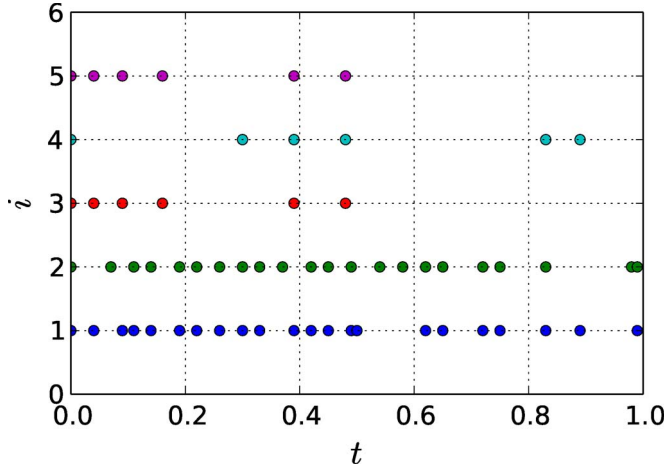


Fig. 8. Instants when a control update is triggered in the control algorithm for robust bounded convergence, during the time interval $[0.0, 1.0]$. The vertical positions of the markers indicate which agent updates its control signal.

TABLE II
AVERAGE INTEREVENT TIME FOR EACH OF THE AGENTS IN THE
TIME INTERVAL $[0.0, 30.0]$, WHEN THE ALGORITHM FOR
ROBUST BOUNDED CONVERGENCE IS APPLIED

node	average $t_k^i - t_{k-1}^i$
1	0.065
2	0.051
3	0.115
4	0.128
5	0.123

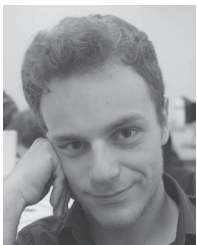
topologies. We found conditions for networked nonlinear systems with event-triggered controllers under which Zeno behavior is excluded and the norm of the error signal vanishes exponentially. A constant lower bound on the interevent times has also been provided for the case of static networks. Numerical examples have been presented to validate the theoretical results.

Some viable extensions of this work include the application of the proposed algorithm to more general classes of networks, such as networks with asymmetric couplings between the agents and networks where errors in the communication can occur, such as delays and packet drops.

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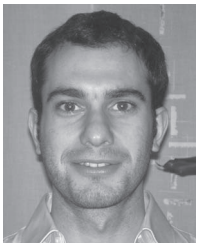
Antonio Adaldo received the M.Sc. degree in automation engineering from the University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy, in 2013 and is currently pursuing the Ph.D. degree in automatic control at the ACCESS Linnaeus Centre in the School of Electrical Engineering, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden.

His research interests include hybrid systems, nonlinear control, and coordination in multiagent systems.



Francesco Alderisio received the M.Sc. degree in automation engineering from the University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy, in 2013 and is currently pursuing the Ph.D. degree in engineering mathematics at the University of Bristol, Bristol, U.K.

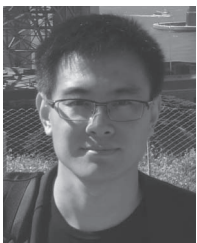
Since 2014, he has been involved in the European Project *AlterEgo*. His current research interests include human-robot interaction and modeling human coordination in multiplayer games.



Davide Liuzza received the Ph.D. degree in automation engineering from the University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy, in 2013.

He was a visiting Ph.D. student in the Department of Applied Mathematics, University of Bristol, Bristol, U.K., in 2012 and at the ACCESS Linnaeus Centre, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden, from 2012 to 2013. Since 2013, he has been a postdoctoral researcher at the Automatic Control Laboratory at KTH. His research interests are in networked control systems, coordination

of multiagent systems, incremental stability of nonlinear systems, as well as nonlinear control and hybrid systems.



Guodong Shi received the Ph.D. degree in systems theory from the Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China, in 2010.

From 2010 to 2014, he was a Postdoctoral Researcher at the ACCESS Linnaeus Centre, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden. Since 2014, he has been with the College of Engineering and Computer Science, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia, as a Lecturer and Future Engineering Research Leadership Fellow.

Dr. Shi was selected as the Triennial IFAC Young Author Prize Finalist in 2011, and was a co-receipt of the Best Paper Award in Control Theory from the 11th World Congress on Intelligent Control and Automation in 2014.



Dimos V. Dimarogonas (M'10) received the Diploma in Electrical and Computer Engineering in 2001 and the Ph.D. degree in mechanical engineering from the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA), Athens, Greece, in 2007.

Between 2007 and 2009, he was a Postdoctoral Researcher at the ACCESS Linnaeus Centre, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden. Between 2009 and 2010, he was a Postdoctoral Associate at the Laboratory for Information and Decision Systems (LIDS) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, MA, USA. Currently, he is an Associate Professor at the ACCESS Linnaeus Centre, Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden. His current research interests include multiagent systems, hybrid systems and control, robot navigation, and networked control.

Dr. Dimarogonas was awarded a Docent in Automatic Control from KTH in 2012. He serves on the Editorial Board of *Automatica* and the *IET Control Theory and Applications* and is a member of the Technical Chamber of Greece.



Mario di Bernardo (SM'06–F'12) received the Ph.D. degree in nonlinear dynamics and control from the University of Bristol, Bristol, U.K., in 1998.

Currently, he is Full Professor of Automatic Control at the University of Naples Federico II, Naples, Italy. He is also Professor of Nonlinear Systems and Control at the University of Bristol.

In 2007, Prof. di Bernardo was bestowed the title of Cavaliere of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic for scientific merits from the President of Italy, HE Giorgio Napolitano. In 2012, he was elevated to the grade of Fellow of the IEEE for his contributions to the analysis, control, and applications of nonlinear systems and complex networks. In 2006 and 2009, he was elected to the Board of Governors of the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society. In 2015 he became an appointed member of the Board of Governors of the IEEE Control Systems Society. From 2011 till 2014 he served as Vice President for Financial Activities of the IEEE Circuits and Systems Society. He has authored or co-authored more than 200 international scientific publications, including more than 100 papers in scientific journals, over 100 contributions to refereed conference proceedings, a unique research monograph on the dynamics and bifurcations of piecewise-smooth system, and two edited books. He serves on the Editorial Board of several international scientific journals and conferences. He is Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CIRCUITS AND SYSTEMS—I: REGULAR PAPERS. He is also Associate Editor of the IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CONTROL OF NETWORK SYSTEMS, *Nonlinear Analysis: Hybrid Systems*, and is Associate Editor of the Conference Editorial Board of the IEEE Control System Society and the European Control Association (EUCA). He is regularly invited as Plenary Speakers in Italy and abroad and has been organizer and co-organizer of several scientific initiatives and events. He received funding from several agencies and industry.



Karl Henrik Johansson (F'13) received the M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in electrical engineering from Lund University, Lund, Sweden, in 1992 and 1997, respectively.

Currently, he is Director of the ACCESS Linnaeus Centre and Professor at the School of Electrical Engineering, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. He is a Wallenberg Scholar and has held a six-year Senior Researcher Position with the Swedish Research Council. He is also heading the Stockholm Strategic Research Area ICT The Next Generation. He has held visiting positions at University of California, Berkeley (1998–2000), Berkeley, CA, USA, and the California Institute of Technology (2006–2007), Pasadena, CA, USA. His research interests are in networked control systems; hybrid and embedded systems; as well as applications in transportation, energy, and automation systems.

Dr. Johansson is currently on the Editorial Board of IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON CONTROL OF NETWORK SYSTEMS and the *European Journal of Control*. He received the Best Paper Award of the IEEE International Conference on Mobile Ad-hoc and Sensor Systems in 2009 and the Best Theory Paper Award of the World Congress on Intelligent Control and Automation in 2014. In 2009, he was awarded Wallenberg Scholar, as one of the first ten scholars from all sciences, by the Knut and Alice Wallenberg Foundation. He was awarded an Individual Grant for the Advancement of Research Leaders from the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research in 2005. He received the triennial Young Author Prize from IFAC in 1996 and the Peccei Award from the International Institute of System Analysis, Austria, in 1993.